

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

A complete listing of the claims is as follows:

Claim 1. (*Currently Amended*) A sealing strip for a rim of a wheel, the sealing strip being adapted to be positioned upon an outer annular channel of the rim, the outer annular channel being adapted to have a tire mounted thereon, the outer annular channel having an upper bridge with a central well bordered by opposite lateral edges and a pair of opposite lateral flanges substantially parallel to a radial plane of the rim, with the lateral flanges having laterally opposed lips on upper ends of the flanges, said sealing strip comprising:

a continuous annular strip;

in cross section, the annular strip of the sealing strip comprising:

a generally U-shaped groove having a shape to adapt the sealing strip to be engaged in the a central well of the rim;

two lateral extensions extending laterally outwardly from said groove adapted to lie upon the opposite lateral edges of the rim;

two walls extending generally radially from said lateral extensions, said two walls adapted to be positioned along the lateral flanges of the rim;

two lips extending laterally inwardly from respective ones of said two walls, said two lips of the sealing strip adapted to be positioned radially inward and beneath the laterally opposed lips of the upper ends of the flanges of the rim, each of said two lips of the sealing strip having a generally radially inwardly facing tire retaining surface.

Claim 2. (*Previously Presented*) A sealing strip according to claim 1, wherein:

said lips of the flanges of the rim include uppermost ends;

said lips of the sealing strip have uppermost ends positioned at a height, with respect to a cross section of the sealing strip, to adapt the lips of the sealing strip to be positioned no higher than said uppermost ends of the lips of the flanges of the rim.

Claim 3. (*Previously Presented*) A sealing strip according to claim 1, wherein:

each of said lips of the sealing strip has an exterior support surface oriented substantially perpendicular to a general direction of said walls of the sealing strip.

Claim 4. (*Previously Presented*) A sealing strip according to claim 1, wherein:

each of said lips of the sealing strip has a cross section that narrows in a direction extending toward a median plane of the sealing strip.

Claim 5. (*Previously Presented*) A sealing strip according to claim 1, wherein:

each of said lips of the sealing strip projects approximately 0.85 millimeters from a respective inner surface of one of said walls of the sealing strip.

Claim 6. (*Currently Amended*) A sealing strip according to claim 1, wherein:

said U-shaped groove is formed by lateral walls having ~~projecting~~ grooves or ridges adapted to connect mechanically with ridges or grooves, respectively, of the central well of the rim.

Claim 7. (*Previously Presented*) A sealing strip for a rim of a wheel, the sealing strip being adapted to be positioned upon an outer annular channel of the rim, the outer annular channel being adapted to have a tire mounted thereon, the outer annular channel having an upper bridge with a central well bordered by opposite lateral edges and a pair of opposite lateral flanges substantially parallel to a radial plane of the rim, with the lateral flanges having laterally opposed lips on upper ends of the flanges, said sealing strip comprising:

a continuous annular strip;

in cross section, the annular strip of the sealing strip comprising:

a generally U-shaped groove having a shape to adapt the sealing strip to be engaged in the central well of the rim, said groove of the sealing strip having a projecting rib;

two lateral extensions extending laterally outwardly from said groove adapted to lie upon the opposite lateral edges of the rim;

two walls extending generally radially from said lateral extensions, said two walls adapted to be positioned along the lateral flanges of the rim;

two lips extending laterally inwardly from respective ones of said two walls, said two lips of the sealing strip adapted to be positioned radially inward and beneath the laterally opposed lips of the upper ends of the flanges of the rim.

Claim 8. (*Currently Amended*) A sealing strip according to claim 7, wherein:

said projecting rib has a shape, in cross section, tapering in a direction extending ~~exteriorly of~~ radially outward from the sealing strip.

Claim 9. (*Previously Presented*) A sealing strip according to claim 1, further comprising:

a valve hole bordered with a flange, said flange projecting in a direction radially inward of the sealing strip.

Claim 10. (*Canceled*)

Claim 11. (*Previously Presented*) A rim for a wheel, said rim comprising:

an outer annular channel, said outer annular channel comprising:

a pair of lateral flanges, said lateral flanges comprising a pair of laterally opposed lips, a respective one of said pair of lips on each of radially outer ends of said flanges;

a bridge extending between said pair of lateral flanges, said bridge comprising a pair of lateral edges extending inwardly from said lateral flanges toward a median plane of the rim and a well extending radial inwardly from said lateral edges;

a sealing strip, separate from said outer annular channel, positioned within said outer annular channel, said sealing strip comprising:

a depression positioned over said well of said bridge of said annular channel, said depression containing a radial groove adapted to receive a pair of beads of a tire;

a pair of lateral extensions extending laterally outwardly from said depression of said sealing strip, said lateral extensions positioned over said lateral edges of said bridge;

a pair of walls extending radially from said lateral extensions, said pair of walls being positioned along said lateral flanges of said annular channel;

a pair of lips extending laterally inward from respective ones of said two walls, said pair of lips of said sealing strip being positioned radially inward of, and not radially outward beyond, said pair of lips of said lateral flanges of said annular channel, each of said pair of lips of the sealing strip having a generally radially inwardly facing tire retaining surface.

Claim 12. (*Previously Presented*) A rim according to claim 11, wherein:

said lips of said sealing strip have radially outermost ends positioned no further radially than outermost ends of said lips of said flanges of said annular channel.

Claim 13. (*Previously Presented*) A rim according to claim 11, wherein:

each of said lips of said sealing strip has an exterior support surface oriented substantially perpendicular to a general direction of said walls of said sealing strip.

Claim 14. (*Previously Presented*) A rim according to claim 11, wherein:

each of said lips of said sealing strip has a cross section that narrows in a direction extending toward a median plane of said sealing strip.

Claim 15. (*Previously Presented*) A rim according to claim 11, wherein:

each of said lips of said sealing strip projects approximately 0.85 millimeters from a respective inner surface of one of said walls of said sealing strip.

Claim 16. (*Previously Presented*) A rim according to claim 11, wherein:

said well of said annular channel includes a pair of lateral walls having ridges or grooves;

said depression of said sealing strip includes a pair of lateral walls having grooves or ridges provided for a mechanical connection with said ridges or grooves, respectively, of said annular channel.

Claim 17. (*Previously Presented*) A rim for a wheel, said rim comprising:

an outer annular channel, said outer annular channel comprising:

a pair of lateral flanges, said lateral flanges comprising a pair of laterally opposed lips, a respective one of said pair of lips on each of radially outer ends of said flanges;

a bridge extending between said pair of lateral flanges, said bridge comprising a pair of lateral edges extending inwardly from said lateral flanges toward a median plane of the rim and a well extending radial inwardly from said lateral edges;

a sealing strip, separate from said outer annular channel, positioned within said outer annular channel, said sealing strip comprising:

a depression positioned over said well of said bridge of said annular channel, said depression containing a radial groove adapted to receive a pair of beads of a tire, said depression of said sealing strip having a projecting rib extending radially from said groove;

a pair of lateral extensions extending laterally outwardly from said depression of said sealing strip, said lateral extensions positioned over said lateral edges of said bridge;

a pair of walls extending radially from said lateral extensions, said pair of walls being positioned along said lateral flanges of said annular channel;

a pair of lips extending laterally inward from respective ones of said two walls, said pair of lips of said sealing strip being positioned radially inward of, and not radially outward beyond, said pair of lips of said lateral flanges of said annular channel.

Claim 18. (*Previously Presented*) A rim according to claim 17, wherein:

said projecting rib has a shape, in cross section, tapering in a direction extending radially outwardly from said sealing strip.

Claim 19. (*Previously Presented*) A rim according to claim 11, further comprising:

a valve hole bordered with a flange, said flange projecting in a direction radially inward of said sealing strip.

Claim 20. (*Original*) A wheel comprising said rim of claim 11.

Claim 21. (*Original*) A wheel according to claim 20, further comprising:

a plurality of spokes mounted in openings within said rim.

Claim 22. (*New*) A sealing strip according to claim 1, wherein:

each of the two lips consists of a single continuous lip extending around said annular strip.

Claim 23. (*New*) A rim according to claim 11, wherein:

each of said pair of lips of said sealing strip consists of a single continuous annular lip.

Claim 24. (*New*) A sealing strip according to claim 1, wherein:

each of the two lips comprises a synthetic rubber or thermoplastic material.

Claim 25. (*New*) A rim according to claim 11, wherein:

each of said pair of lips of said sealing strip comprises a synthetic rubber or thermoplastic material.

Claim 26. (New) A rim according to claim 11, wherein:

each of said pair of lips of said sealing strip is movable from a first position, prior to a tire being mounted on the rim, to a second position, with a tire mounted on the rim;

in said second position, each of said pair of lips of said sealing strip is flexed upwardly to be positioned between a tire bead and one of the pair of laterally opposed lips of the lateral flanges of the rim.

Claim 27. (New) A rim according to claim 26, wherein:

each of said pair of lips of said sealing strip comprises a synthetic rubber or thermoplastic material.